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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from the Maine Student Athlete Alcohol and Other Drug Use Assessment conducted in 1991. It is noted that the survey instrument was comprised of 155 questions and was completed by 2,891 junior and senior high school student athletes in grades 7 through 12. Results are presented in these areas: (1) percent of athletes who perceive a moderate to very big problem with alcohol and drug use among their teammates; (2) amount of use of alcoholic beverages by male and female athletes; (3) amount of use of tobacco products by male and female athletes; (4) percentage of male and female athletes reporting monthly, weekly, or daily use of beer, cigarettes, marijuana, or steroids; (5) percent who report that adults in their communities sponsor parties where alcohol is served to athletes; (6) percentage of athletes who have never practiced or played a game while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; (7) percentage of athletes who will go to a party where alcohol and other drugs are being served; (8) percentage of those who have ever been concerned that a member of their family has a problem with alcohol or drug abuse; (9) how often the subject's school allows an athlete to get help for alcohol/drug problems without being punished; and (10) percentage of athletes feeling some, a fair amount, or intense pressure to participate, perform, and win in school athletics. (ABL)

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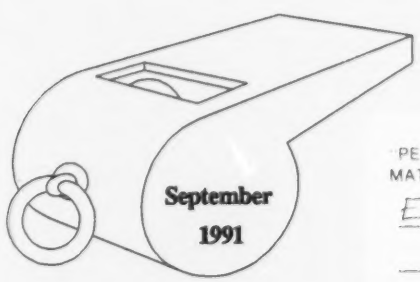
SUMMARY REPORT

1991

MAINE STUDENT ATHLETE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE ASSESSMENT



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DEDICATION
DR. BARRIE E. BLUNT

The Division of Alcohol and Drug Education Services contracted the services of Dr. Barrie E. Blunt in 1987. His expertise in survey research contributed significantly to the successful completion of the 1988 Maine Alcohol and Drug Assessment of students state-wide and the parallel state-wide study of school administrators. Several individual school systems subsequently conducted local surveys using Barrie's guidance and expertise. In 1990, Barrie undertook the development of the survey instrument and methodology for this state-wide assessment of student athletes' use of alcohol and other drugs. In October 1990, Barrie was diagnosed with cancer, which took his life on February 11, 1991. In the four years of his work with the Division, everyone who met and interacted with Barrie appreciated and admired his professional skills, integrity, sense of humor, concern for others, and commitment to excellence. It is with sincere gratitude for all he gave, and with deep sadness at his death, that we dedicate this report to his memory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. John Hale, Psychologist, Licensed Substance Abuse Counselor

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Our sincere thanks go to the student athletes who participated in the survey, athletic directors, and administrators of the 21 cooperating schools.

MAINE STUDENT ATHLETE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE ASSESSMENT

-PRELIMINARY REPORT-

September, 1991

William Primmerman, Education and Training Consultant

Division of Alcohol and Drug Education Services

INTRODUCTION

The Maine Student Athlete Alcohol and Other Drug Use Assessment was conducted from March 15 through May 15, 1991. This report outlines the findings for athletes in grades 7 through 12, state wide. It is the first effort in Maine to assess the perspective of student athletes with regard to the nature and extent of alcohol and other drug use by junior and senior high school athletes. This base-line data will help guide school policy and program decisions in alcohol and other drug prevention and education in athletics.

The sampling procedures, survey design, and empirical analysis were detailed and thorough (See Appendices I and II). The survey instrument comprised 155 questions and was completed by 2891 junior and senior high student athletes (junior high = grades 7 and 8). When a percent total reported is less than 100, it indicates some participants did not answer the question or a rounding representational error has been made. The narrative itself comprises four sections and two appendices. The body of the report considers student athlete responses to selected questionnaire items and a discussion of relationships between different items. The first appendix is devoted to the sampling procedure while the second outlines the methodology used to create the survey.

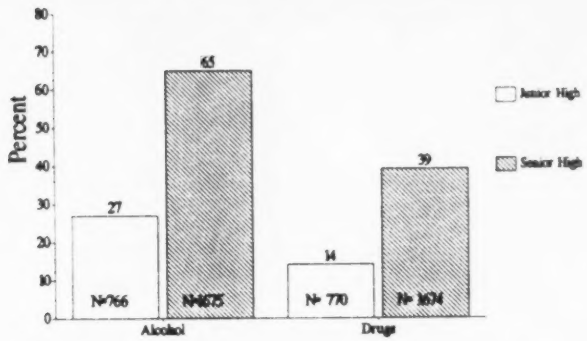
RESULTS

I. USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Sixty-five percent of the high school respondents perceive a "moderate" to "very big problem" with alcohol use among their teammates, and 39% report a concern about other drug use among their teammates. At the junior high level, 27% of the respondents perceive a "moderate" to "very big problem" with alcohol use among their teammates as opposed to 14% indicating a concern regarding other drug use among their teammates (see figure 1).

Figure 1

Percentage of athletes who perceive a moderate to very big problem with alcohol and drug use among their teammates

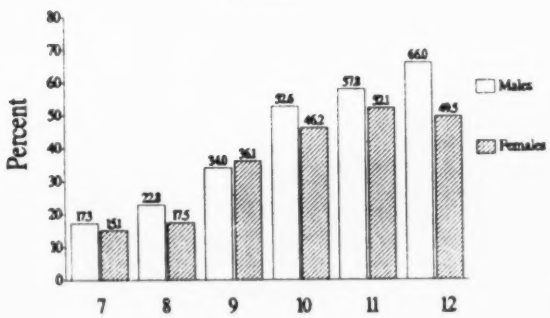


Female athletes at both the junior and senior high grade levels perceive a greater problem with alcohol and other drug use than males.

Use of alcohol and other drugs exists across all grade levels and becomes more prevalent as grade level increases. The reported use of alcohol by student athletes is higher for males at all grade levels except for freshmen. Thirty-six percent of freshman females use alcohol compared to 34% of freshman males. Female alcohol use peaks at the 11th grade while male use shows a continued climb through 12th grade (See figure 2).

Figure 2

Reported monthly, weekly, or daily use of alcoholic beverages by male and female athletes

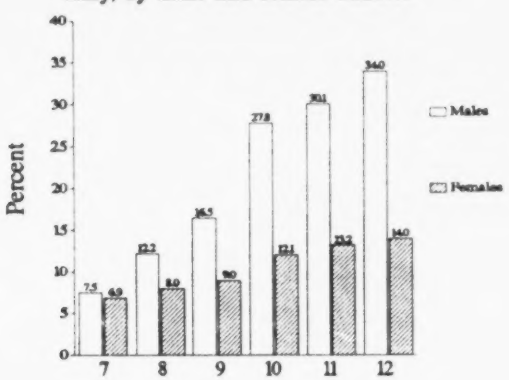


According to the respondents here, alcohol and tobacco (the legal social-recreational drugs for adults) are the drugs of choice used by athletes.

By 12th grade, 66% of males and 50% of female athletes reported alcohol use monthly, weekly or daily. Responses to the survey showed that 91% of senior high school athletes and 67% of junior high school athletes indicated that alcohol was easy to acquire. Tobacco use increases more dramatically for males than for females. By 12th grade, 34% of the males and 14% of the females reported using tobacco products monthly, weekly, or daily. The largest jump for males is between 9th and 10th grades, where tobacco use increases from 16.5% to 27.8%, a rise of 11.3%. Female athletes also show their greatest rise in consumption, 9.0% to 12.1%, during the freshman and sophomore year. Sixty-six percent of junior high school athletes and 92% of senior high school athletes indicate that tobacco products are easy to acquire (See figure 3).

Figure 3

Use of tobacco products, monthly, weekly, or daily, by male and female athletes



Beer (alcohol) is the drug of choice among all athletes in grades 7-12 with 31.7% of high school female athletes and 45.9% of high school male athletes using beer monthly, weekly or daily. This is an increase in use from 8.8% of female junior high school athletes and 12.6% junior high school male athletes. The use of beer by male and female athletes far exceeds the use of the other illicit drug use (See figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4

Percentage of male athletes reporting monthly, weekly, or daily use of beer, cigarettes, marijuana or steroids

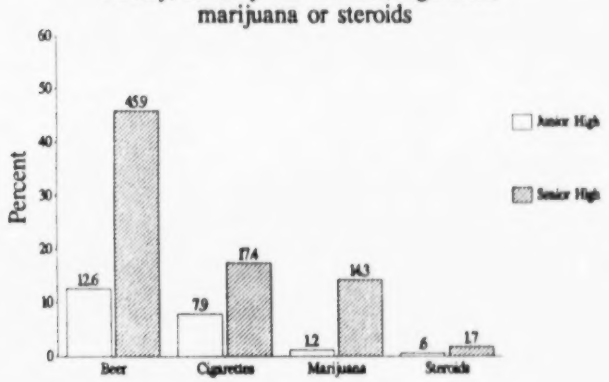
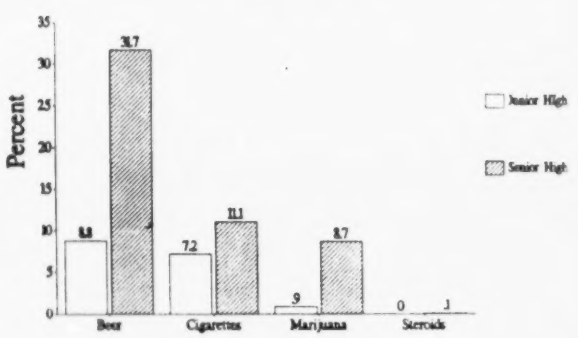


Figure 5

Percentage of female athletes reporting monthly, weekly, or daily use of beer, cigarettes, marijuana or steroids



One percent of the junior high school athletes and 3% of the senior high school athletes report use of steroids. Ninety-six percent of the junior high school athletes report they have never used marijuana. This figure drops to 73% of high school athletes reporting they have never used marijuana.

II. USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS TO PERFORM, LOOK, OR FEEL BETTER

Although 83% of these student athletes state they do not feel it is " O.K." for athletes to use substances to enhance performance, 19% of male athletes and 7% of female athletes report they would use a substance to enhance performance. Eleven percent of athletes report having played or practiced while under the influence of alcohol or another drug. Twenty-three percent of male athletes indicate they would take a substance to increase body size.

Forty-eight percent of males and 42% of females state they would take a substance to relieve pain and 26% of the female athletes indicate they would take drugs to lose weight as compared to only 11% of male athletes.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND SCHOOL

I. COMMUNITY

Twenty-five percent of the student athletes report that adults in their communities sponsor parties where alcohol is served to athletes. Thirty-nine percent of the athletes responding to this question said that adults they knew never promoted alcohol use by athletes. Athletes report magazine advertisements (23%), T.V. commercials (19%), and friends (14%), were key encouragers of them to use alcohol or other drugs. According to the survey results, friends, teammates, college students and street dealers are the major source of alcohol and other drugs to athletes.

Athletes report that peer pressure is not a major factor for using; however, the key source of supply for alcohol and other drugs are those of the same or slightly older peer group. This seems to indicate that peers are not promoting a clear non-use message with each other as teammates while off the field of competition.

As reported in the survey, 70% of junior high school athletes and 55% of senior high school athletes report they never or hardly ever have a community sponsored chemical free event to encourage non-use.

It is clear, by the response of the athletes, that use of alcohol or other drugs while practicing or playing sports is not O.K. Ninety-four percent of junior high males and females, 83% of senior high males and 91% of senior high females surveyed have never practiced or played while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (See figure 6A). In contrast to this, 50% of junior high males, 39% of junior high females, 80% of senior high males and 75% of senior high females will go to student parties in the community where alcohol or other drugs are being used (See figure 6B). Combining this data with the percentage of athletes who use alcohol and tobacco, it seems to indicate that the majority of use by athletes occurs socially in the community, outside the school, and off the athletic field (see figures 6A and 6B).

Figure 6A

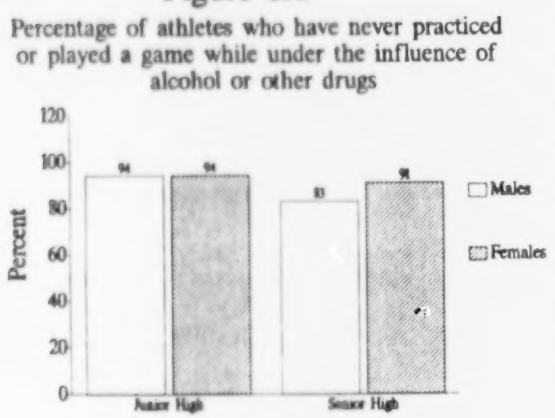
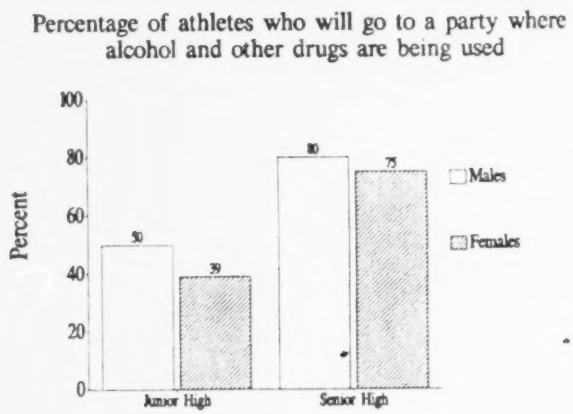


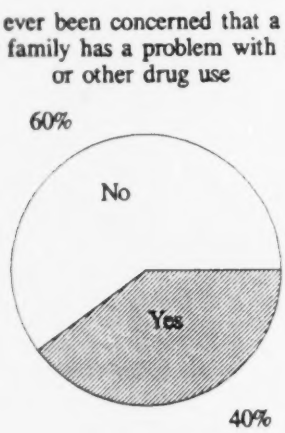
Figure 6B



II. FAMILY

The data shows that 40% of the athletes grades 7-12 feel a concern for a family member having a problem with alcohol or other drug use (See figure 7).

Figure 7



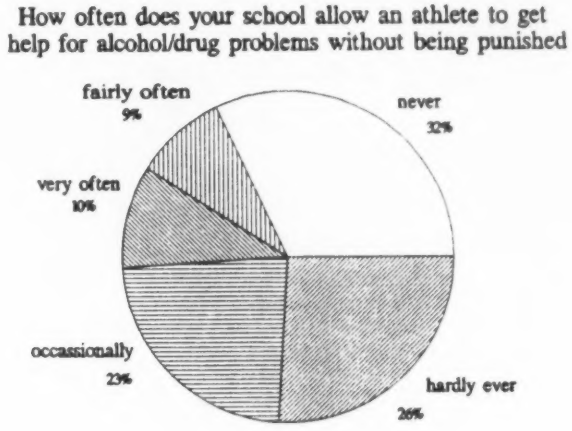
Twenty percent of senior high athletes reported they could get alcohol or other drugs from a sibling, and 14% reported they could get them from a relative. Seventy-eight percent of the athletes surveyed feel their parents encouraged and supported them in choosing not to use alcohol or other drugs. Eighty percent feel their parents would disapprove of their alcohol use and 94% feel their parents would disapprove of their use of illegal drugs. Only 31% of the student athletes report they feel safe in talking to one of their parents if they have a problem concerning alcohol or other drug use.

III. SCHOOL

Fifty-eight percent of the student athletes felt that getting help for an alcohol or other drug problem for themselves or a teammate would never or hardly ever happen without receiving punishment. Only 19% of the athletes surveyed feel often or very often that an athlete could receive help without being punished. Thirty-seven percent of senior high school athletes and 52% of junior high school athletes feel they would report a concern about a teammate's use of alcohol or other drug to an adult in their school (See figure 8).

There appears to be a direct connection between seeking help and fear of punishment that goes beyond peer pressure. Sixty-four percent of the athletes reported it would be very easy for them to get help for themselves or a teammate. To get help without getting their friends in trouble seems to be the key issue.

Figure 8


How often does your school allow an athlete to get help for alcohol/drug problems without being punished
fairly often 9%
never 32%
very often 10%
occassionally 23%
hardly ever 26%

In response to the question of "Whether athletic codes or contracts help athletes to be chemical free?", 82% of junior high school athletes and 57% of senior high school athletes indicated yes, they do.

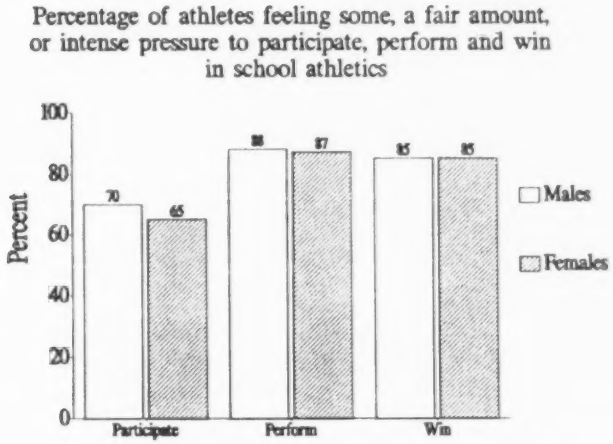
IV. PERSONAL GOALS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SELF

Athletic competition beyond high school is a common goal of the surveyed athletes. Seventy-eight percent of males and 79% of females have goals to play at the college level with 54% of males and 40% of females having a goal of attending college on an athletic scholarship.

Eighty-four percent of male athletes rate their skill level at average or somewhat above average, while 91% of females rate their skill level at average or somewhat above average. Seventy-one percent of high school males and 69% of high school females feel that younger athletes look up to them as role models.

Athletes indicated that they do feel pressure to participate, perform and to win (See Figure 9). The combined percentages of athletes who feel some, a fair amount, or intense pressure to perform and win is equal for both males and females.

Figure 9



SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present base line data from the survey of student athletes, not to provide an in-depth analysis. From the data, athletes seem to be telling us that:

* Athletes use alcohol and other drugs and believe a problem exists with the use among athletes.

* The social-recreational substances (alcohol and tobacco products) are the most widely used and abused by athletes.

* The majority of alcohol and other drug use occurs within the community, not in schools or on playing fields.

* Athletes have concerns about family members and friends using alcohol and other drugs.

* Athletes are concerned about punishment when asking for help with an alcohol or other drug problem.

* Athletes do feel pressure to perform and win.

* There is a need for more alcohol and other drug prevention and education activities for athletes.

* Schools need to create a more trusting climate for athletes to feel safe in seeking help for themselves or teammates.

* Schools need to provide athletes with a clear understanding about alcohol and other drug policies.

Special Note of Thanks and Next Steps

A sincere "thank you" is extended to all the male and female student athletes who took the time to honestly share their personal perspectives on the nature and extent of alcohol and other drug use among Maine school athletes. Recommendations based on the findings of this data will be developed by the Division of Alcohol and Drug Education Services' Program Review and Comment Committee, as appointed by the Commissioner of Education.

The tabulated survey results by sex and junior-senior high status is available from the Resource Center, Division of Alcohol and Drug Education Services, State House Station #57, Augusta, Maine 04333 (Tel 207-624-6500).

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APPENDIX I - SAMPLE METHODOLOGY

Respondents

The respondents to this study are student athletes attending public schools in the state of Maine, grades seven through twelve, during the school year 1990-91.

Student Athlete

A student athlete is defined as an individual who has participated, or is participating, in a minimum of one organized inter-school sport in the 1990-1991 school year. The sample is limited to students in grades seven through twelve and does not include students who participate in intramural, rather than inter-school, activities.

Why a Full School Year

An entire school year is identified as the framework for sample selection so that any student who represented their school in an organized sport would be included in the study. Thus, for example, an individual who participates in one Winter sport but no other sports (Fall or Spring) would be included in the survey. Individuals who participate in more than one sport would also be included in the study.

Organized Inter-School Sports

Organized inter-school sports are considered in this study to comprise any seasonal athletic activity which may exist at a public school and are under the supervision of a school representative (e.g., faculty or staff). These activities are indicated below and are compiled using four primary sources of information: 1) American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation 2) the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 3) National Federation of State High School Associations and 4) Maine State Principals and Maine State Athletic Directors Associations.

Baseball	Football	Lacrosse	Swimming
Basketball	Golf	Ski-Alpine	Tennis
Cheerleading	Gymnastics	Ski-Nordic	Track & Field
Cross-country	Ice hockey	Soccer	Volleyball
Field hockey	Indoor track	Softball	Wrestling

Sampling Approach

The optimal sampling design for this study would provide all student-athletes with an equal opportunity of being selected for participation in the survey. Towards this end, a list of all such individuals would be identified and a random sample extracted. Unfortunately, there is no such list or directory and the complexity of creating one exceeds the scope of this project.

As an alternative to this procedure, the following steps were employed to derive a sample of student athletes currently enrolled in grades 7 through 12.

Step 1: Identify the ten athletic leagues competing in the state of Maine and their public schools serving the following grade clusters.

a) schools with both 7th and 8th grade classes
b) schools with grades 9 through 12

Step 2: Randomly select schools from each of the ten leagues.

Step 3: Check selected schools to assure representation of sports, class rankings, and geographical location.

Step 4: Contact each school identified and request their participation in a confidential survey of athletes, grades 7-12. To accomplish this objective, a school representative needed to identify all possible athletes and get a signed permission form by a parent or guardian of the athlete.

Step 5: Administer the survey to all identified student athletes. Survey administration was performed by four selected and trained professional consultants.

NOTE: Procedures were developed to protect the identity of student athletes and individual schools. Arrangements with all specified individuals took place at the school between school personnel and the student athletes. Scheduling of surveys was arranged between school administrators and the survey consultants. All school data was pooled before being analyzed.

Limitations of the Sampling

There are two main limitations in the sampling procedure. First, as parental permission was required for student involvement in the study, it is possible that those individuals not allowing their children to participate may have common characteristics, the omission of which could distort population estimates.

Second, not all schools that were initially selected to participate chose to join in the study. In each case, another school system was randomly selected and contacted from the corresponding school league. Nevertheless, it is possible that the systems declining to participate had common characteristics, the impact of which might be inflated or deflated statistical estimates.

APPENDIX II - SURVEY INSTRUMENT METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire included sex, grade, and 155 items regarding alcohol and other drug perceptions, attitudes, and use. Each participant answered the questions in the survey on a machine-readable answer sheet. The answer sheets were processed at the Machine Scoring Office at the University of Maine. A machine-readable data file was created for questionnaire analysis.

A total of 2891 junior and senior high school athletes (n=2891) participated in this study. Junior high school included grades seven and eight. Senior high school included grades nine through twelve. Two items on the questionnaire were used to validate self-reports of respondents. A fictitious steroid called derbisol was listed twice in the questionnaire. All respondents who said they knew athletes who used derbisol (n=311) or who used it themselves (n=39) were considered invalid and removed before the analysis of the data.

In addition, the data analysis was based on people who provided information on their sex and grade. One hundred and four students did not give their grade and 45 students did not give their sex. These responses were not selected for the data set. All analyses conducted were based on the responses of 773 junior high school student athletes (341 males and 432 females) and 1678 senior high school student athletes (832 males and 846 females). The total number of valid responses plus the total number of student athletes selected out exceeds the total n=2891 indicating some respondents were selected out for more than one reason.

SPSS, a statistical software package for IBM mainframe computers, was utilized to prepare the descriptive statistics included in this report. These statistical operations included frequency distribution and cross tabulation analysis. The preparation of preliminary tables, graphs, and charts was completed by the Center for Research and Evaluation, College of Education, at the University of Maine.